

BOOK REVIEWS

ROAD ACCIDENTS – MEDICAL AID. By Hans Pacy. (Pp. 136; figs. 30. £1.00).

Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1971.

IT is commonplace to observe that the increasing numbers of deaths and disabling injuries due to accidents on our roads are the cause of concern to the public and the profession, and while much has been written on the subject of such injuries, and their treatment, in well-equipped units and hospitals, in far too few places has any attempt been made to improve on treatment at the site of accident, and to utilise to the best advantage on such site the skilled knowledge of experienced doctors.

Here, in a text of 120 pages, Dr. Pacy has put on record the experiences of himself and others from a considerable bibliography to help the practitioner who may be called to the scene. It is implicit throughout the book that the saving of life in those recoverably injured lies in early and effective medical intervention at the accident site, and his suggestions for clinical recognition of life-threatening conditions, and for the recovery of the victims from wreckage and their subsequent handling are quite apposite.

The text, necessarily compressed, is perhaps, not the most easily readable, while the illustrations could have been improved by the use of suitable photographs in places. Nevertheless, this is a most useful book, which can be strongly recommended to all interested in the subject; the final observations on the organisation of a modern intensive care road rescue service might well be noted by those who plan the overall strategy for accident and emergency services, for much of what is said applies equally to many other forms of accident.

J.W.W.

TREDGOLD'S MENTAL RETARDATION, Eleventh Edition. Edited by R. F.

Tredgold and K. Soddy. (Pp. xi+490; plates 25. £5.00). London: Ballière Tindall & Cassell, 1970.

IT is seven years since the last edition of this textbook appeared and was reviewed in this Journal. There are many changes to be found in its pages, both by way of revision and arrangement of the text and an increase in the number of contributors.

This book presents the reader with a composite overview of the multidisciplinary approach to the problems of mental retardation. The chapters dealing with recent developments in genetic and chromosomal anomalies provide comprehensive coverage of these subjects. Epilepsy in the subnormal is described in detail. The greater part of the book, however, is devoted to descriptions of the behavioural repertoire of the retarded child against the background of his many handicaps, affecting as they do the quality and nature of his experiences and the responses of others towards him. This is examined perhaps in greatest detail in the chapter dealing with disorders of relationship formation and forms the basis of a useful approach to the understanding of early infantile autism.

The dynamic approach to the psychological and social problems of the mentally retarded is developed further in this edition and Freudian concepts are frequently invoked to explain the phenomena described. For those who seek alternative explanations, no reference can be found in the index to recent behaviourist concepts and their possible relevance to this field. Some older psychological terms are used in the chapter on mental development; for instance, "faculties" (p. 43) and "sentiments" (p. 44) and the tri-partite description of "mind". Whilst these have descriptive value their frequency of use has declined in recent years.

There is a sense of historical perspective to be derived from reading a book that has been in existence for 62 years and has gone through many editions. It is a source of knowledge, wisdom and understanding in an important branch of Medicine. Graduate students of psychiatry, paediatricians, child psychiatrists and those working in the field of mental subnormality will find it both valuable and informative.

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